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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/612,108 | 07/02/2003 | Eleftherios Rodousakis | 5015.1004 | 3372 |

23280 7590 07/24/2006

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EXAMINER

HEWITT, JAMES M

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| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
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3679

DATE MAILED: 07/24/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. 10/612,108 | Applicant(s) RODOUSAKIS ET AL. | |
| | Examiner James M. Hewitt | Art Unit 3679 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 May 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 May 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 5/5/06 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-3 and 5-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Neuschotz (US 3,035,797).

With respect to claim 1, Neuschotz discloses a connection arrangement for detachably connecting a first flexible tank (right 11 in FIG. 1) and a second flexible tank (left 11) of an aircraft, comprising: a latching device (22); a first tubular connecting element (14 and 21 associated with first tank) defining a first axis (parallel to surface 30), having a first mating wall (defining surface 30) parallel to the first axis and being

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attached to the first tank; and a second tubular connecting element (21 associated with the second tank) defining a second axis, having a second mating wall parallel to the second axis, and being attached to the second tank, one of the first and the second connecting elements being telescopically slidable within the other of the first and second connecting elements such that sliding contact occurs between the first and second mating walls and being detachably connected to the other of the first and second connecting elements by the latching device, wherein, in a connected state of the connecting elements, the first and the second tanks are in fluid communication with each other via the first and the second connecting elements and the latching device is disposed inside one of the first and second flexible tanks so as to be actuatable from outside the respective flexible tank through the respective flexible tank without opening said respective flexible tank (see col. 2 line 69 – col. 3 line 3).

With respect to claim 2, wherein in the connected state, the first tubular connecting element projects into an inside of the second flexible tank. Refer to FIG. 2.

With respect to claim 3, wherein the latching device includes a first spring element (40).

With respect to claim 5, wherein the first flexible tank includes a rubber fitting (34) and the first tubular connecting element includes an attachment flange (33) for attaching to the rubber fitting.

With respect to claim 6, the first flexible tank is directly attached to the first tubular connecting element.

With respect to claim 7, further comprising a rib element (15) separating the first flexible tank and the second flexible tank.

With respect to claim 8, the second flexible tank is directly attached to the second tubular connecting element.

With respect to claim 9, wherein the second tubular connecting element projects into an inside of the second tank.

With respect to claim 10, further comprising a sealing element (31) disposed between the first and the second tubular connecting elements.

With respect to claim 11, wherein the latching device is arranged at the first tubular connecting element.

With respect to claim 12, wherein the sealing element is an o-ring.

With respect to claim 13, wherein each of the first and second connecting elements is integrally formed as a single component. The first element would be member (14) and the second element would be member (21).

With respect to claim 14, Neuschotz discloses a connection arrangement for detachably connecting a first flexible tank (right 11 in FIG. 1) and a second flexible tank (left 11) of an aircraft, comprising: a latching device (22); a first tubular connecting element (14 and 21 associated with first tank) attached to the first flexible tank; and a second tubular connecting element (21 associated with the second tank) attached to the second flexible tank, the first and the second connecting elements being detachably connected to each other using the latching device, wherein, in a connected state of the connecting elements, the first and the second tanks are in fluid communication with

each other via the first and the second connecting elements, the first tubular connecting element projects into an inside of the second flexible tank (see FIG. 2), and the latching device is disposed inside one of the first and second flexible tanks so as to be actuatable from outside the respective flexible tank through said respective flexible tank without opening said respective flexible tank (see col. 2 line 69 – col. 3 line 3)..

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neuschotz (US 3,035,797).

Neuschotz teaches all the limitations of claim 4 except that the first and second spring elements are positioned across from each other at an angle of 180 degrees. From Neuschotz statement at lines 30-2 of column 3, "There may typically be three of the latch or dog elements **22**, mounted to ring 21 at three evenly circularly spaced locations." and at lines 52-54 of column 3, "Where three of the latch or dog elements **22** are employed", it should be understood that at least two or four, and conceivably other given pluralities of latches may be employed, so long as they are evenly circularly spaced. In the instance that there are two or four latch elements, there would be two or four spring elements, two of which would be positioned across from each other at an

angle of 180 degrees. Given Neushotz's statements that imply that only three latch elements are suitable, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to at least employ two or four latch elements and thus spring elements.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments, see pages 7-8, filed 5/5/06, with respect to the rejection under 35 USC 102(b) by Shakesby have been fully considered and are persuasive. This rejection has been withdrawn.

Applicant's arguments, see pages 6-7, filed 5/5/06, with respect to the rejection under 35 USC 102(b) by Neuschotz, have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Refer to the interpretation provided in the above rejection.

Conclusion

This is an RCE of Application No. 10/612,108. All claims are drawn to the same claimed invention and could have been finally rejected on the grounds and art of record in the next Office action if they had been entered. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL** even though it is a first action in this case. See MPEP § 706.07(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

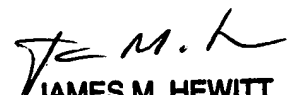
shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no, however, event will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James M. Hewitt whose telephone number is 571-272-7084.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel Stodola can be reached on 571-272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JMH
7/18/06


JAMES M. HEWITT
PRIMARY EXAMINER